

Kuwahara is trying for the big comeback. Bike-wise and team-wise. Here are two ODDS in their favor: the Nova, a qual raceable scooter for a not-so-odd \$199, and "The Culligan Man," a fast and stylish 16-year-old space oddity.

KUWAHARA NOVA

IT PASSED WITH FLYING COLORS

A GORK TALE
WITH WINDY PHOTOS

LAME DIRECTIONS AND STUCK-UP BLONDES

I had my directions and after making a quick stop at AM/PM to get a Dew, I was cruising down the 91 Freeway towards Everything Bicycles. KNAC was cranking some cool tune, so I was rockin' out when some total moon babe in a convertible '85 Toyota Supra cruised up alongside me. All right, I thought, a road swoop. Ha! The gorgeous blonde took a long hard look at my car, scoping it from front to back, and then, after looking on my roof, took off. Oh well—I'm on company time anyway, I thought, but gee, my car really isn't that bad, is it? I mean, I have my new Goodyear radials on it with Centra wheels (just like Haro's), and it's plastered with BMXA rub-ons. What else can you ask for?

I proceeded to get lost, and eventually pulled up at a 76 station to get the correct stats. I walked up to the attendant and the first thing he asked me was, "What's that on your roof?" I said, "What?" and turned around to check if some bird had splattered all over it. He paused, and said, "Why do you have a picnic table on the roof of your car?" You jerk, I thought, that's my bike rack! It ain't no picnic table . . .

THE BUILDING, BIKES, AND DOBERMAN PINSCHER

Back on the road now with the right directions, I pulled up at the new Everything Bicycles building, home of Kuwahara. I was greeted at the door by a Doberman pinscher named "Keira." A few seconds (which seemed more like an hour) later, Howie

Cohen walked in and told me to get off the ceiling. (Howie owns Everything Bicycles).

Since I'd never been at Kuwahara before, he gave me a dime tour of their new facility. Their front offices were first. They come factory equipped with a half uh dozen salesmen on the phones, and a few secretaries to boot (no, not to kick around). Moving on into their art department, they were working on new ads, which gave me a sneak peek at Kuwahara's new freestyle bikes. The freestyle lineup is pretty sano, with two models of 'stylers that come with ACS Rotors, plenty of platforms, cool colors, and even cooler price tags.

Next came a tour of the warehouse (which was packed to the rafters with bike boxes), and a short story about Kuwahara's OTHER factory mascot: a registered thoroughbred race horse named "Flying Bike Boy." He (the horse) was going to race out at Santa Anita in a coupla' weeks, so Howie was pretty stoked about it, imagining another "John Henry." Kentucky Derby, look out!

We finally made it to the main man's office, and there leaning against the wall near his desk were two of the new Nova models, just in from Taiwan.

The new '86 Novas have two-tone paint jobs. In a word—AWESOME. None of that paint and chrome bit, but a PAINT and PAINT finish (kind of like the European ten-speed look).

He had two of the three different color combos sitting there. One of 'em had a pink front triangle, pink seat post, pink rims, and pink bars with a white rear end, white forks, and white

components. The other one, leaning against a big wooden crate with Oriental writing on it, had a blue front triangle and blue rims. The seat post, rear triangle, bars, and forks were yellow. Howie explained to me that in the future, this one will be blue and white (white where any yellow is). The bikes looked hot, and Howie was darn proud of 'em. The third variation, which fell overboard somewhere between Taiwan and here, is opposite of the one we tested. It will have a yellow front triangle, bars, and seat post with a blue rear triangle and forks.

Looks taken care of, the next question that came to mind was price. Howie told me to sit down for this one, so expecting the worst, I did. He said "200 dollars...no wait. Make that \$199. It sounds better!" Hmmm. Not bad. Not bad one bit.

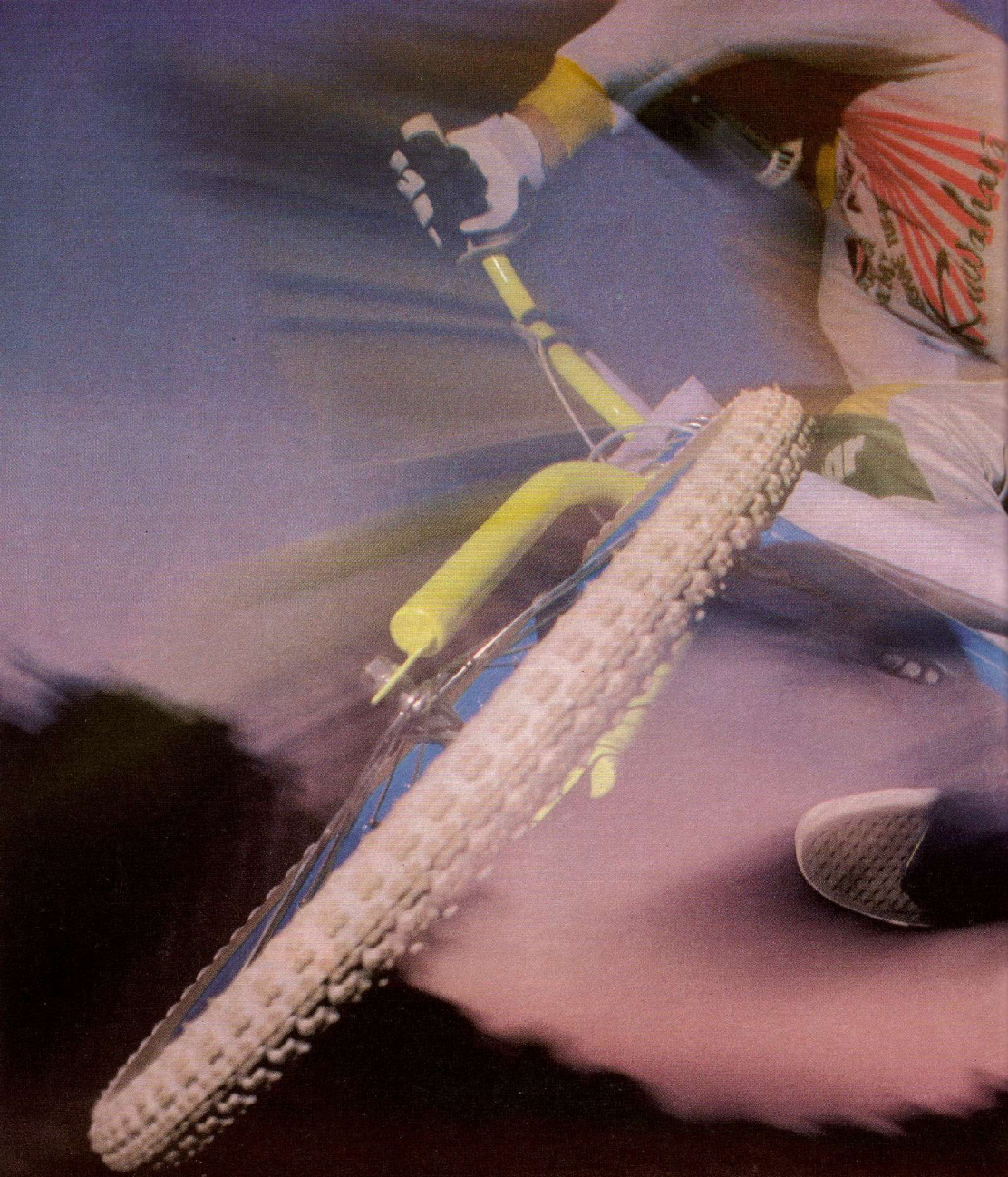
With a fast farewell, thanks, and a handshake, I was outta there with two bikes under my arms. Just as I was putting the last Kuwahara on my roof rack, I heard the pitter patter of four little feet. Keira dove for me, barely missing my arm but ripping the sleeve off my BMX ACTION T-shirt. I ducked into my car quicker than Hollywood puts out Rocky sequels. Gone in 10 seconds flat!

LOOKS, COMMENTS, AND CHILI-CHEESE DOGS

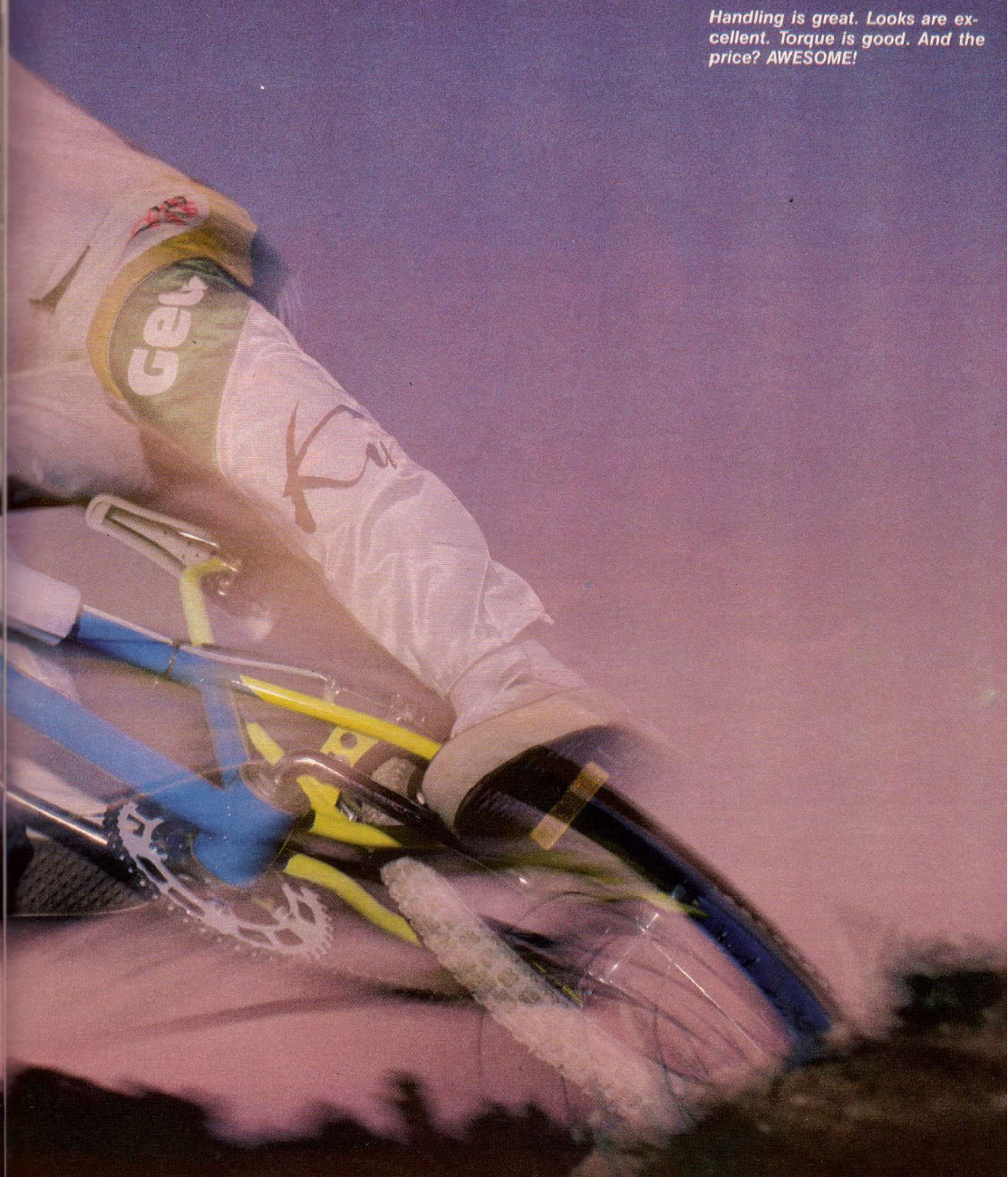
Pulling up at the first stoplight, rockin' out to some group that none of you would've ever heard of before, I looked over at this school bus next to me and noticed about 30 lil' kids squishing their noses against the windows. Heh, heh...must be my new wheels, I figured. That sorta made up for that blonde on the freeway earlier. (Sorta.)

My stomach was in dire need of some munchables, so before I drove up the mist shrouded mountain, I pulled up to the drive-through box at Der Wienerschnitzel.

"That'll be \$9.45 at the window—please pull forward." So I did. Hmmm. The girl at the counter wasn't too shabby, I noticed, as she gave me 55 cents change. And then came her big question: "Do you compete?" staring intently at and referring to the two bikes on my roof. At that moment, it dawned on me that she was only after me for my Kuwaharas and I quickly grabbed my food, and replied, "NO. I race." She took a deep breath and said, "Those are PRETTY bikes." I was quick to correct her, saying, "NO. They're RAD!" I then



Handling is great. Looks are excellent. Torque is good. And the price? AWESOME!



threw my car into first and lit 'em up outta there.

At headquarters, I wheeled the brand new babies into the warehouse and sat down at a table to chow. Joe, the car wash man who comes by

every Wednesday to detail Oz's Porsche, was the first one to walk by. I asked him what he thought of the two Kuwaharas laying on the floor. Joe kinda shrugged his shoulders, and told me that "the color is

nauseating." (The man has no taste.) Don then strolled out of his office (which is rare—we barely ever let him out) and he started freaking out over the Novas. "Whoa! Look at that color! I like the blue and yellow one the

best." (Now that was the reaction I was waiting for!)

Right as I was downing my last chili-cheese dog, up rode your average, certifiably insane test rider, Dave Cullinan. He was early (as

usual). Even being the factory Kuwahara dude he is, Dave hadn't seen these new Novas yet, and he totally dug the colors. In conclusion, we decided that every kid will love the looks.

BIKE IN THE FAST LANE

Since Dave and I were going to stop off at Orange to race after the test session, we took two cars. Windy followed in the Astro Van, while Dave and I cruised in the Gork mobile

This is the pink and white Kuwahara that blew everyone's eyeballs out of their sockets at first sight. Play it safe—wear your Vuarnets.



equipped with a plentiful supply of cassettes and two Kuwaharas up top.

At the beginning of side two of Stryper's new album, Dave and I heard a big CLUNK, and I looked in my rear view mirror to see the pink and white Kuwie doing five foot high back wheel hops in the fast lane. Even worse, there came Windy and Astro. "BLAM!" 65 mph bike slammin'! After a brief session of "Frogger" recovering the bike out of lane four, we were back on the road to Riverside. (One bike in the trunk, and one in the back seat.) Never could trust that picnic table . . .

Once there, I doctored our injured pink and white Kuwahara, and then Dave did his patented "hop on the bike and jump it with no helmet on." The pinkie Kuwie came out REALLY well considering its short stint as a road block. A massively tweaked seat was about the only injury to it. So far, the Nova held up great under freeway testing conditions.

The componentry on the '86 Nova

is pretty sano. The finest points on it are the Ukai shiny-sided aluminum rims with Sunshine sealed-bearing hubs, the Dia-Compe MX-901 rear brakes (which ARE the best brakes out, no doubt), and the Anlun chrome-moly cranks. Qual stuff.

JUMPS, TURNS, AND BERMS

YEAH! The jumping. Mike Miranda had a whole bunch of spots in Riverside picked out for us to hit, and about ten locals showed up to watch Cullinan hang it all on the line. The Nova turned out to have the same problem in the handlebar depo that the Haro did last month—too much bend in the bars. Dave claimed that they were more inward than the Haro bars. (Haro changed their bars after the test. Will Kuwahara?) Change 'em if you're the total hardcore racing maniac or buns up and bonzai BMXer. The typical street thrasher won't know the difference.

The rest of the bike was dialed. The "Culligan Man" was getting a bit wild

and munched it a few times doing "Ricky's," but the bike took the over-abuse. "Sand Hills" had these doubles where you land in the sand and Dave's front end kept sinking in, throwing him off the bike and onto the hard pack dirt ten feet down the hill. We never figured out why he couldn't land in the soft stuff. . .

Dave concluded the jumping sesh by saying, "The bike's got pluses and minuses off jumps. If you made a mistake, it's hard to correct yourself. The bars are too tucked."

At dusk, we tested the handling capabilities. Some pretty hectic power wheelying out of turns, hitting berms at warp speeds, and doing radical bermshots told us that for a budget bike in the 200 smackeroonie range the Nova could probably hold its own on the track quite well.

And that was our next venture. . .

MIGUEL'S AND WEDNESDAY NIGHT RACES

Once it got dark, we called it quits

and jammed over to Miguel's Burritos for some authentic Mexican grub. Then, with major heartburn, we were off to the Orange YMCA track for some race action. Amazingly, no tickets as we broke land speed records trying to make it before sign-ups closed.

Upon arrival, I prepped Dave on our objective: RACE ANALIZATION! I wanted to see how the bike would hack it under race conditions, and important stuff like that. When Cullinan usually races, he rides a Kuwahara Laser Lite, which is a higher bracket Kuwie MADE for racing. Note that this was the Nova—a totally different bike, which is basically for beginners, going out the door for a dollar under the 200 buck mark. And Dave raced it bone stock. And even better yet, he jammed!

I know what you're thinking. Dave is a good racer anyways, and he's

also a factory Kuwahara rider, so some of you might be doubting the reasons why Dave blazed on it. I know it wasn't because of the bike alone, but then again, it wasn't because the bike was glowing as if it were radioactive and scared off all the comp. The Nova deserves half of the credit. How often can ANYBODY go out and blow away or be competitive in the pro/am class (which sports some of the best in So. Cal.) on a stock \$199.00 bike? YEAH! It was like Scott Clark in 1981 at the NBA Fresno Nationals—riding a bone stock Murray and winning on it! I'd say the Nova passed with flying colors!

To finish it up, I wanted to hear Dave's side of the story:

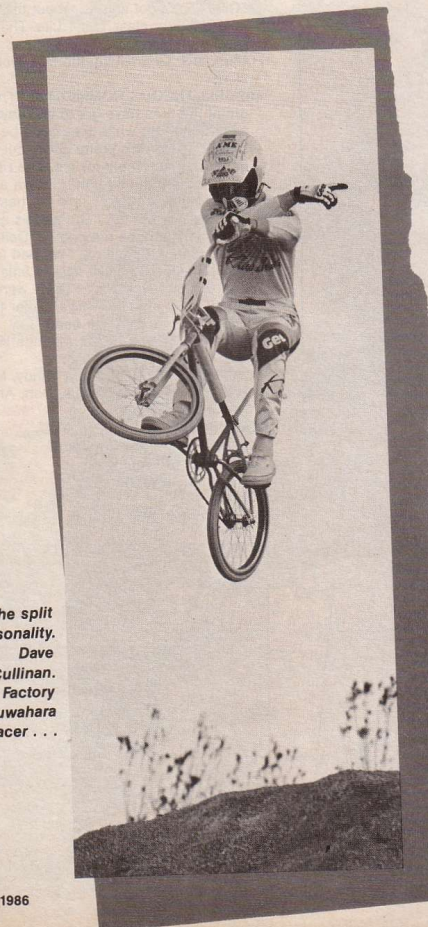
"I thought the bike wasn't really the HOTTEST jumper. But when I got out on the track, my feelings changed more than I can really explain. I got on the gate, and was thinking that the

hard gearing would slow me down—I normally run easy gears, but I could crank on it and get good power out of it with the stock 44-16 gearing. I'm surprised! I was holeshooting, snapping, powering down the straights, and beating all the locals in the motos."

"Seriously, this bike is one bad racer. I had, -what, a couple of hours on it?! And I beat Orange locals, which is an accomplishment in itself, because they're like the baddest dudes in the history of local racing. I'd give the bike an A - in racing, and. . ."

Okay Dave, that's enough. Shut up! And that concludes our test. By the way, I got Dave to take the bikes back to Kuwahara for me. What, me? Afraid of that nice doggie? Nawwww. I would've done it myself, but, you know . . . somebody had to write the story—and I can't type with one arm!

continued



The split personality. Dave Cullinan. Factory Kuwahara racer . . .



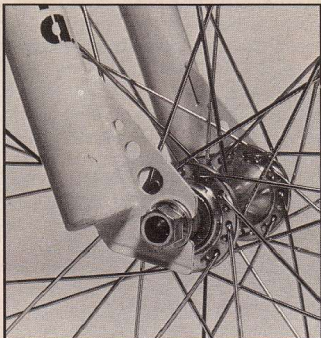
. . . or the "Culligan Man," a.k.a. Dave "Cull'nan the Destroyer." BMXA test thrasher extraordinaire.

Price & Specs

COMPLETE BIKE PRICE: \$199.00.
FINISHES AVAILABLE: Pink/white, blue/white, and yellow/blue. Frame and fork sets will be sold separately.
COMPLETE BIKE WEIGHT: 26 1/2 pounds.
FRAME WEIGHT: 4 pounds, 11 1/2 ounces.
FORK WEIGHT: 1 pound, 15 1/2 ounces.
HANDLEBAR RISE (C/L of stem clamp area to C/L of grip area): 8 1/2 inches.
HANDLEBAR WIDTH: 27 inches.
TOP TUBE O.D.: 1 1/8 inches.
DOWN TUBE O.D.: 1 1/4 inches.
FORK LEG O.D.: 1 1/8 inches.
STEERING HEAD ANGLE: 72 degrees.
SEAT TUBE ANGLE: 71 degrees.
BOTTOM BRACKET HEIGHT: 11 1/2 inches.
WHEELBASE: 36 1/2 to 38 1/2 inches.

Components

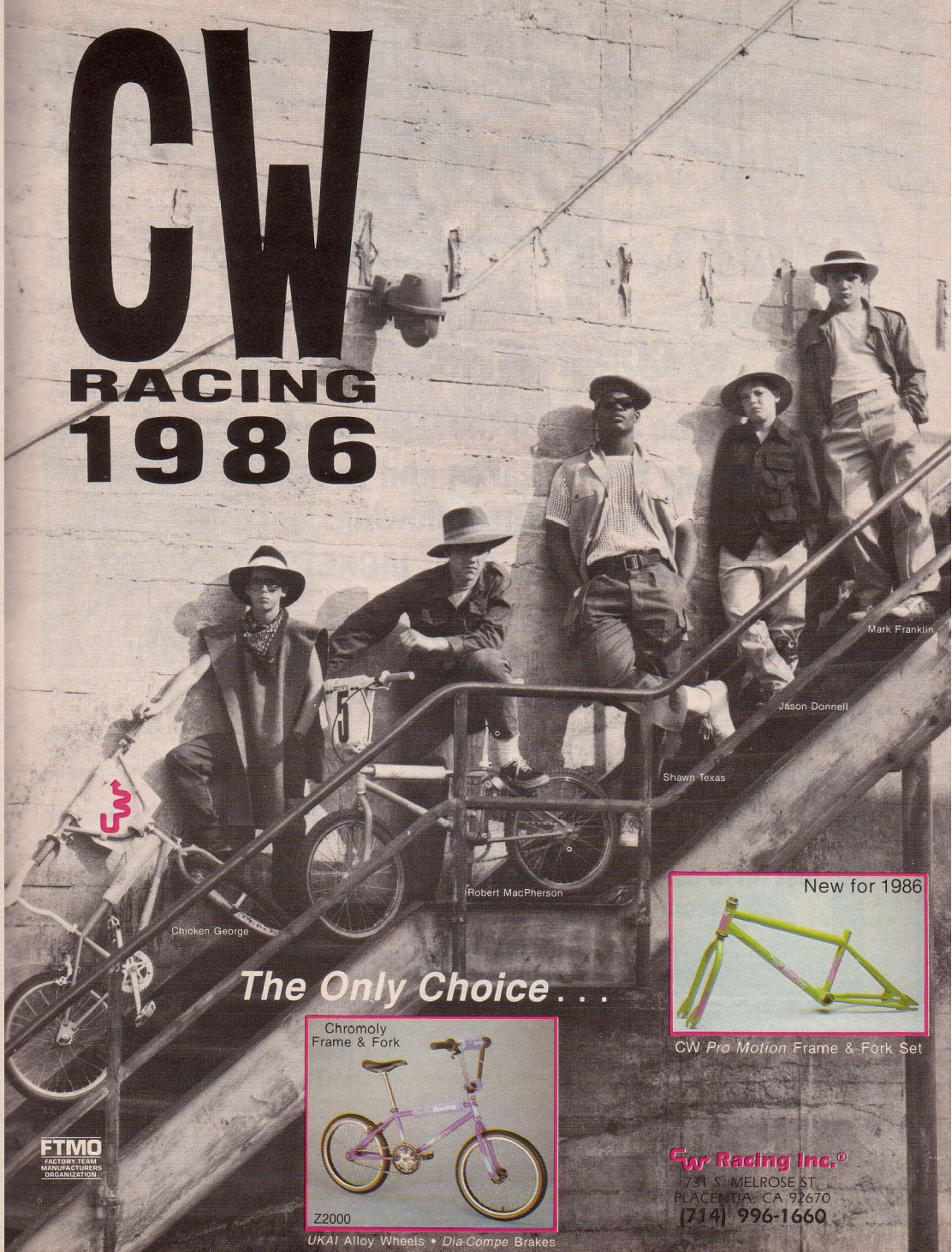
FRAME: Kuwahara Nova, tri-moly, chrome-moly front triangle, high tensile steel rear end.
FORK: Kuwahara Nova, chrome-moly.
HANDLEBAR: Kuwahara, high tensile steel.
HANDLEBAR STEM: Kuwahara, forged aluminum head, chrome-moly shaft.
GRIPS: Soft vinyl.
HEADSET: YST, chrome plated.
RIMS: Ukai, aluminum, shiny-sided with painted middle.
SPOKES: 36, .080.
HUBS: Sunshine, aluminum, low flange, sealed bearing.
TIRES: Kenda, 20 X 1.75 front and rear, white.
BRAKE: Dia-Compe MX-901, rear only.
BRAKE LEVER: Dia-Compe Tech 4.
BRAKE PADS: Dia-Compe.
BRAKE CABLES: Dia-Compe.
CRANK: Anlun, chrome-moly, 175mm.
PEDALS: Victor VP-300, plastic body, chrome-moly shaft.
BOTTOM BRACKET SET: YST.
FRONT SPROCKET: 44 tooth.
SPIDER: Anlun, five star pattern.
REAR SPROCKET: Sunfour, 16 tooth, chrome-plated chrome-moly.
CHAIN: KMC, 1/8 inch.
SEAT: Viscount Kuwahara model Dyna.
SEAT POST: Layback, chrome-moly.
SEAT POST CLAMP: Anlun, aluminum.
ACCESSORIES: Complete pad set in white, with Kuwahara logo.



Performance Evaluation

PURPOSE: Neat for street, and an ace to race. (Up to expert racing.)
AGE RANGE: 12 and up racing and road flogging.
QUALITY OF FINISH: Good. Real good paint. The bright colors are awesome! Paint was thin in spots. It chipped easily near the bottom bracket.
QUALITY OF WELDING: Nice and average.
QUALITY OF COMPONENTRY: Really good. Brakes, wheels and drivetrain are all excellent.
OVERALL APPEARANCE: SPIFF! An 8 on the 1 to 10 scale. One sharp mutha! Up 'til now, Kuwahara bikes were never totally noticeable. They will be now.
GEOMETRY: Cool angles. About the same as the higher class Laser Lite. That means it's good.
HANDLING: Gnarly! Not too fast. Not too slow.
MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS: "The colors of the tires have got to go! Anyone who races with white tires outta be shot!..." "It handles pretty good, but the bars are just terrible for me. The rise and the bend are not so hot!..." "Down a straightaway it's fast!..." "It's the best looking bike I've seen!..." "The pedals are good. Suzue hubs are cool!..." "Definitely a good street thrasher!..." "We had to tweak the Tech 4 brake lever a little in the vice 'til it was perfect!..." "Grips were pretty soft for wanna-be-A'me's!..." "For the price, the bike can't be beat!"
TEST AREAS: Sand Hills, Miranda Hills, and The Jump on the Hill.
TEST INPUT: Culligan Man, Windy, Mike Miranda, 10 Corona locals, Don, Andy, Lewbus, and Gork.
MANUFACTURER: Everything Bicycles/Kuwahara
 1207 Mahalo Place
 Compton, California.
 90220
 (213) 635-8101 ■

CW RACING 1986



Mark Franklin

Jason Donnell

Shawn Texas

Robert MacPherson

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